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Relationships Between Unintentional Exposure to Internet Sexual Content and Sexual Behavioral Intention Among Chinese Youth

Abstract:

Research on youth’s exposure to Internet sexual content focuses primarily on intentional seeking and its effects on sexual behaviors. By contrast, this study examines the relationships of unintentional exposure to Internet sexual content among college students in China to intentions for sexual intercourse and condom use and theoretical mediators of such intentions, including attitudes, norms, and self-efficacy. A sample of 524 Chinese college students completed an online questionnaire. Results show there was no direct effect of unintentional exposure on behavioral intention. Unintentional exposure was indirectly associated with intention to have sex through mediators of attitude, perceived descriptive norm and injunctive norm. The effect of unintentional exposure on descriptive norm was larger for females than males. By contrast, unintentional exposure was not associated with intention to use condom or any of the mediators, which suggests increasing sexual health risks among youth in China.